MESSAGE FROM KABUL UNIVERSITY

It is a great pleasure that at a time when t' children of Afghanistan, due to eighteen years fighting in Afghanistan, poverty, and displacement are deprived from their rights to live and education, the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA), is holding a Seminar on the Rights of the Child in Afghanistan.

Amongst rights matters, today in Afghanistan, the violation of the rights of the child is more talked about. Despite the existence of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", "Convention on the Rights of the Child", "Universal Declaration of Children Rights", "International Labour Organization" and tens of other instruments, Afghan children lost their rights to live due to the continuation of the war and presence of millions of landmines; lost their national and cultural identity as a result of migrations, and also they are turned into forced laborers by economic pressure and poverty which have deprived them from the right to education.

Education of children not only secure the natural and basic rights such as mental and cultural development of the child, but also it improves cultural, economic conditions, and supports democratic institutions in the future in Afghanistan. Education and nourishment is the basic needs of every human being. If these needs are not met from the very childhood, obviously, it will be an irreparable loss to the child. But, today, millions of Afghan children, whether inside or outside the country are deprived from the light of education.

Kabul University as the biggest educational, cultural, and academic institution of Afghanistan, announces its deep concern on the existing obstacles for the education of the Afghan children.

At the end, Kabul University, wishes every success for the participants to analyze child rights in Afghanistan in all aspects and explore ways and means of solving the problems.

Prof. S. Amir Shah Hassanyar,
President of Kabul University, Kabul, Afghanistan

MESSAGE FROM AFGHAN DISABLED CHILDREN

We, Afghan disabled children, are saying to the world community:

"That, we Afghan Disabled Children need help, such as, literacy, profession, treatment, and artificial feet. At least we, disabled Afghan, should have a better living conditions; our health condition should be put under consideration; and for our vocational education, institutions should be built.

Should be provided with food and shelter, and for our literacy Program teachers should be hired. We, Afghan disabled children are call upon those who love human beings to assist us in away so that we feel we are completely physically fit".

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM STREET WORKING CHILDREN

Thanking from CCA and all the staff organizers who, through holding this seminar, attracts world community and humanitarian agencies attention to the rights of the child.

We, street working children, are from amongst the most deprived children in our country that work in the streets from early mornings to late nights just for gaining a loaf of bread both for ourselves and our families. Most of us, of course, are victimized by fighting between the warring groups.

Besides being deprived from human rights we are insulted and disgraced at the work place. Until now, insufficient attention have been paid to our rights. Some people think that God creates us just for working in the street and have no rights at all.

We ask all international organizations and relief committees help us solve our problems and gain our due rights in order to get rid of this cruel circumstances. Help us enjoy our basic rights such as the rights to education, health, professions and self sufficiency. In this way we can move ahead towards the freedom and also can participate in social activities.

Part II
Addresses

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN TO LIVE IN CO-EXISTENCE AS IMPORTANT AS EDUCATING THEM IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

. Welcome Address By

Mr. Sarwar Hosaini,
Director CCA

"When the buried girl shall be asked for what sin she was slain" The Holy Koran 81,9".

Dear participants, Respected Mr. Francis Okelo, Deputy Head of Special Mission UNSMA, high level officials of UN agencies, directors of NGOs, diplomats of friend countries, Afghans from different provinces of Afghanistan like Kabul, Herat, Mazar, Jalalabad and other areas, and participants from different cities of Pakistan and European countries thank you all for your attendance and I appreciate your participation in this seminar on the Rights of the Child in Afghanistan.

In continuation of holding a series of seminars, the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA) is very happy to be able to provide a nation-wide opportunity, again, for the discussion and exchange of ideas another hot issues of human rights in Afghanistan. Children constitute the majority of war victims and are mostly affected by the impact of war. The child is a person that grow up and is vulnerable. Development and vulnerability are the two characteristics that more external factors such as violence and war on the child more prolonged. As a vulnerable person, a child is easily effected by war, and violence, and as a developing person, he/she is in danger of losing his mental, physical, and psychological growth. A barrier to his/her development not only effects his/her present but their future as well. This is why the influence on a child is lasting. Based on these facts, and according to the international documents, children have to be specially protected against violence, discrimination and exploitation which is barely done in Afghanistan.

During the civil war when the social and cultural structures protecting and worked for child development were damaged, a number of international aid agencies tried to assist Afghan children. The services provided by those agencies, whether professional or in partnership with others, are appreciated. But compared to the need, the aid to children were quite limited and was of temporary nature. On the other hand, Afghan people themselves failed to pay enough attention to the needs of their children due to several reasons. Therefore, the problems of Afghan children remained unsolved. Although emergency and temporary aid helps in reducing pain, it is not adequate in solving the problems.

The goals and objectives of this seminar is within concentrated on determining strategies and practical steps to be taken for the betterment of situation of Afghan children.

To improve children's living conditions in Afghanistan and to ensure that their recognized rights are implemented, the Afghan people must play a big role and actively participate in this process. No program or assistance without the people's support will produce a positive result. At the same time, children themselves can contribute to changing the situation for their own benefit. It is a generally argued that children could not identify their own needs and priorities, therefore, they can not defend their rights. But if

children are helped to have access to the required information, they will surely be able to play an important role if not the key role.

On the occasion of this seminar on the rights of the child and believing in the equal rights of all children regardless of gender, we once again want the Taliban Islamic Movement to remove the ban on girl's and women. As it was announced previously by CCA, the exclusion of girls and women from education and social and economic activities, is not only a denial of their basic Islamic and human rights, but it is the cause for isolation of Afghanistan from the rest part of world community. Also, in the long term, it deprives the whole society from their talents and capacities.

Children are the future builders of our society. If we want to have a free and prosperous Afghanistan, then we should educate our children in a way that they will learn to live coexistence and with respect for others along with educating our children in science and technology.

The Seminar on the Rights of Child in Afghanistan coincides with the 7th anniversary of adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child by the UN General Assembly. I hope the participants in this seminar by discovering and offering strategies for solutions to child survival, protection, development and participation, give the Afghan children a suitable present on the occasion of the 7th year of the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of Child.

SAD TWIST DEVELOPED FROM THE AFGHAN WAR:

RUTHLESS, UTTERLY, PURPOSELESS AND BLOODY STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Opening Address By.

Francis Okelo
Deputy Head of the
UN Special Mission to Afghanistan

Director Sarwar Hosaini, Distinguished Participants, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A poet once remarked that every child that is born into this world shows that God is not yet tired with humanity. Afghan children are being born daily inside and outside Afghanistan, indicating that despite the tragedy and calamity in that country -- which are purely man-made -- the Almighty Allah continues to hold it in great regard.

I am pleased to have been invited to address the beginning of this two-day seminar organized by the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan on the

Rights of the Child in Afghanistan. Since its foundation in 1990, the CCA has demonstrated a remarkable concern for the devastating effects of the civil war in Afghanistan on its people, especially women and children, and has tried to develop the necessary resistance to these effects. This seminar is organized especially to continue CCA's work along this line, with a particular emphasis being placed on the Afghan child. I should like to pay a warm tribute to the Director, the management and staff of the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan for their outstanding work.

After ten years of negotiations, the international community adopted exactly six years ago the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At that time, the withdrawal of the former soviet forces from Afghanistan was completed the year before. There was a great relief and excitement about that withdrawal : aid began coming into Afghanistan. The United Nations created an office to coordinate the flow and use of this aid in Afghanistan. While all this was happening, another sad twist to the Afghan conflict was developing: the Afghan leaders, having finished fighting the external enemy, turned ferociously against each other in a ruthless, utterly, purposeless and bloody struggle for power. The excuse given for the war at the time was the need to rid the country of a Soviet-imposed puppet government in Afghanistan. That government was removed in April 1992. There was, therefore, no further excuse to continue the hostilities. But the war carried on -- with or without excuses, right up to this moment as I am speaking to you.

Afghanistan has been at war for sixteen years now: ten against an external enemy, and six against itself. The death and destruction inflicted on the country in the last six year are grater that in the first ten. Afghanistan is more ruthless to itself that it is to its enemy. And those who have and continue to suffer the most are the thousand, innocent children of Afghanistan, who are totally bewildered at the stupidity of the adults.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is primarily intended to encourage the recognition and protection of the basic dignity and rights of the children of the world, including their rights to survival, protection and development. This applies to Afghanistan as well which signed the convention. But Afghanistan, is still far from achieving that goal.

In the next two days, this seminar will address a number of topics relating to the rights of the Afghan child: its survival, development, protection and participation. You will discuss a variety of strategies needed to promote progress in these areas. You will come out with a number of recommendations, perhaps mostly directed at the United Nations. Having done that, your seminar may published and perhaps circulated. And some will say that your job is done.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next two days are important to the children of Afghanistan. The end of the seminar is precisely the beginning of your work. I dare say that what is at stake, as far as the Afghan child is concerned, is not so much his/her rights -- that is God -- given; you cannot add or take any of it away. The crucial issue is the duties of Afghan adults toward the children of Afghanistan. The rights in themselves mean nothing to these children unless we adults endeavor to create the necessary condition and environment where these rights are respected and nurtured, enabling these children to grow up into responsible, self-fulfilled adults in a country at peace with itself. This is our challenge. And I hope that you will not unduly engage in a dry academic and legal exercise at this seminar, but that you will join your heads to your hearts and try to contribute as best you can and at your level to the well-being of the Afghan child.

We at the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan are trying our best to bring about a cease-fire in Afghanistan, and to help mediate and acceptable, broad based political settlement in that country. In the last four months, there has been a remarkable increase in international interest in Afghanistan, especially by the United Nations Security Council, which last month adopted a resolution on Afghanistan, the first ever such resolution, calling for the cessation of hostilities and a peacefully negotiated solution. Tomorrow in New York, the UN secretary-general will chair a high level meeting of some fifteen countries with interest in Afghanistan, again the first ever such meeting. The head of the Special Mission, Dr. Holl, is there to present the Afghan case.

The international community is trying to do the best it can to end the Afghan tragedy. Although we may think that the UN best is not good

SUMMARY

1. Introduction:

The fourth CCA's annual seminar titled the Rights of the Child in Afghanistan was held at Dean's Hotel in Peshawar, Pakistan from 17 to 19 November, 1996.

The objectives set for the seminar were:

- to highlight the situation of Afghan children in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- to develop strategies for promoting the rights of Afghan children so as to improve the status of Afghan children;

enough, we must realize that peace and stability in Afghanistan will not arrive without the sincere and committed cooperation of the Afghan leaders, especially the warring ones. That cooperation is hard in coming, but we are working patiently at it. A broader aim of this seminar should, therefore, be to encourage the creation of the right the climate for a peaceful political dialogue in Afghanistan, and to support the UN peace efforts in this regard in any way it can.

The advent of peace and stability in Afghanistan will ensure that the rights of the Afghan child is protected and developed, and the future of this child secured.

With these brief remarks, may I wish you all success in our deliberation.

And it is my great pleasure to declare this seminar open.

Thank you very much.

CHILD INTEREST AND THOSE OF LEGAL GUARDIANS DO NOT NECESSARY COINCIDE



. *Keynote Address by*

Mr. Jorgen Persson,
Representative, Radda Barnen

Introduction:

Ladies and gentlemen, let me first say that I feel very honored to be here today, very privileged to have been asked to deliver the keynote address at this seminar organized and hosted by the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan, CCA in short. This seminar is the third [forth] in a series of annual seminars organized by CCA; earlier seminars have dealt successfully with the important issues of human rights and women's rights with relation to Afghanistan. Let me already here say that I wish the host

organization and the participants all success in their forthcoming work during this seminar.

During the next three days there will be presentations and discussions in which the rights of children will be looked at and discussed in the context of Afghanistan today. Distinguished participants with a deep knowledge of the Afghan society will stimulate us and guide us. Concerned participants, representing different walks of Afghan life, will, I hope, participate actively in the seminar proceedings, thereby gaining valuable new knowledge. And thereafter, they will, I hope, be more able and more confident in taking the rights issues to the Afghans.

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't pretend to have much knowledge of the complicated situation prevailing in Afghanistan today. Neither can I claim to have any deeper insights into the habits, customs and norms of the traditional Afghan society. My humble contribution to this seminar will therefore by limited in its focus and restricted to the rights of the child in general, the universal rights of children if you so wish, and the convention on the Rights of the Child that provides us with the base for discussing the rights of the child in Afghanistan here. I then hope and believe that other, more learned and experienced partners will take over from where I leave, and fill the gaps that, by necessity, I have to leave you with.

Dear participants, I believe that the case of rights for children, the rights of children, is probably today the most noble and urgent cause of mankind. And, not the least, the rights of children are important in the context of war-torn and war-weary Afghanistan.

My own organization, Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children), was established in 1919, at the end of the great war in Europe called World War I, with a view to making a reality of children's rights. The terminology was not the same then, 77 years ago, as it is today, but surprisingly early, already in the 1920's, the concept of children's rights was introduced and began to gain acceptance. Today, more than 100,000 Radda Barnen members in Sweden work for children's rights and all-in-all 250,000 Swedish citizens, members and non-members, provide financial support to Radda Barnen to advocate and make a reality of the rights of children everywhere, in Sweden as well as in other countries.

When I first arrived in Peshawar four years ago, I had been duly briefed regarding Radda Barnen's policy of blending practical relief and development work with advocacy. I felt confident that I would be able to cope with the relief & development aspects of our work in Afghanistan. But how to tackle the advocacy tasks? Here we were, an NGO - without any political or religious affiliations of any kind but admittedly Western by origin - and we were moreover supposed to advocate the allegedly alien concept of children's rights. How on earth could we deal with this aspect of our work?

I needed not have worried. Our own staff, our dedicated Afghan and Pakistani trainers, that some of you already have come into contact with, conveyed to me their experiences from working with children and their families, in refugee camps in Pakistan, among the internally displaced persons settled in camps outside Jalalabad, and in communities in various parts of Afghanistan. In all these situations, our staff met a strong reaction among the Afghan adults to the situation they were facing. They were tired of the war, of other violence, of the break-down in law and order, of the difficulties of earning bread for the family, of eroding social and cultural values, of absent welfare services. They were worried indeed about their own situation - but they were more worried about the situation of their children. The children were the ones that had suffered the most. They were the future. It was not fair that they should have nightmares about bomb explosions, live in dirty and congested camps, with war traumas, be denied schools and health facilities, be abused by impoverished and frustrated elders... The children had all these needs that were not met, they deserved something much, much better. In fact, children should have a right to food and shelter, to happiness, to education, to care and protection. Children have a right to a decent childhood. Children have rights... children have rights.

Well, there we are. As has been discovered and pointed out on so many occasions by many observers, the care and protection of children come very high in the Afghan tradition. But it is not unique for Afghanistan to put children first, this tendency can be noticed in societies around the world. You may therefore say it is universal.

The Convention of the Rights of the Child

Which brings me to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, or the CRC as we sometimes say. This convention is an effort to bring together, in a comprehensive and explicit way, the natural rights that children are universally perceived to have. The effort to arrive at a universal convention took a long time. Already in 1924, the then League of Nations adopted a declaration about the rights of the child. Thirty-five years later, in 1959, the United Nations adopted a revised and extended Declaration. Neither of these documents, however, were binding on the governments of the world; they were significant statements of principle but no more. Therefore an idea emerged about drafting a treaty between governments on the rights of the child. In the late 1970's the United Nations agreed in principle to go further with this proposal.

The decision to embark on the project to draft a special convention for children was not obvious. One could have stopped at referring to already existing norms, of instance the two United Nations human rights convenience. However, it had become evident that the existing human rights norms were inadequate to meet the special needs of children. There were strong reports on grave injustices suffered by children such as infant mortality, deficient health care for children and limited opportunities for basic education. There were also appalling accounts of children exploited in harmful jobs, about children in prison or in other difficult circumstances, about child soldiers, about children as refugees and victims of war.

Another reason why it was felt that the 1959 declaration was not sufficient was that the thinking about the rights of the child had developed sustancially since it was adopted. There was now a greater awareness of the psychological needs of children. Furthermore, people had woken up to the fact that the interests of children were not identical to those of their guardians; it was clear that many children were maltreated within their own families.

The project to draft a convention started within the UN Commission of Human Rights; a special working group was wet up under that body. One feature was especially important during the drafting process: NGOs were

allowed to take part in discussions and put forward proposals. Eventually, after ten years of intense discussions and sometimes hard bargaining, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was complete. It was there adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on November 1989, and states were encouraged to ratify it.

The CRC is drafted by governments. It is adopted by governments and it addressing itself to governments. Still I would say that the CRC is unique as an instrument of human rights in the international field in that it is of so much relevance to others than governments. It is unique because it has got more support than any other human rights agreement so far. UNICEF is nowadays firmly placing all its policies on the foundation of the CRC. Many NGOs including those of the international Save the Children Alliance - promotes and uses the CRC. The NGOs can also perform the role of "watchdogs", monitoring authorities implementation of the convention. But, most important of all, states are declaring themselves as standing behind the principles of the convention. Today no less than 187 governments in the world have ratified this convention. Two countries, i.e. Switzerland and the USA are signatories to the convention, with ratification pending. Less than a handful of countries - I believe they are only three - have neither signed or ratified the CRC. There is good hope that all countries of the world would be behind the Convention of the Rights of the Child before the year 2000.

What about Afghanistan, you may ask? What is Afghanistan's position regarding the CRC? The answer is that Afghanistan became a signatory to the CRC on 27 September 1990, ratified it on 28 March 1994 and saw it coming into force on 27 April 1994. Afghanistan also added a *reservation* while becoming a signatory. I will come back to this reservation later in this address.

The message of the Convention

Who is the child?

The very first article of the Convention defines which individuals are covered by the norms. A child is defined as every human being below the age of 18 years, unless majority is attained earlier according to the law of

the country. Obviously, this wording is the result of a compromise. Majority is attained at 18 in a number of countries, but it is reached earlier in some countries and later in one or two countries. To reach an international agreement on the age of majority was not considered possible. However, the age of 18 still forms some kind of benchmark. *The most important aspect of the definition is of course that is makes clear that the Convention covers not only younger children, but also those who have reached their teens.* (This fact is still often forgotten or ignored). In reality, there is not one single threshold between childhood and adulthood. This is also recognized in the convention, for instance in article 12 about giving weight to the views of a child in accordance with the age and maturity of that child. With respect to the minimum age of employment and of criminal responsibility, governments are required to defined age levels, which implies that such levels could be lower than 18, though not too low.

The rights and the parents

The convention deals with matters which in many cultures are perceived as private. To take one example, the convention addresses situations where children are badly treated by their parents or other guardians. It opposes ill-treatment and accepts that intervention might be necessary to prevent various forms of maltreatment or neglect. Thereby it wâs make clear that the child's interests and those of the legal guardians do not necessary coincide. This is a significant aspect of the convention; we know from experience that some of the worst abuses perpetrated against children take place within the family.

This is not to say, however, that the convention is hostile towards the family. On the contrary, in several places it underlines the importance of the child being able to grow up in a secure family environment. In fact, the convention states clearly that the family should be afforded the necessary support and assistance by the State. *Hence, the tri-partite relationships between children, legal guardians and the authorities are treated by the convention in a balanced manner. Children are seen as individuals with rights of their own, while at the same time the importance of parents and other legal guardians for the child's development is recognized.*

The convention as such is not formally binding on individuals; for example, on parents. It is the government of each country that is responsible for ensuring that the norms laid down in the convention are adhered to in actual practice. Still, the convention can be used as an instrument for discussion about private relations to children or about conduct of professionals who work with children.

Four general principles

There are four major principles which together bring out the essence of the convention. They are enshrined in articles 2,3,6, and 12.

Non-discrimination:

One general principle is that all children shall enjoy their rights - of child should suffer discrimination. The obligation to provide equality of opportunities among children is expressed in article 2:

"State parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parents' or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status."

The message here is about *equality* of rights. Girls should be given the same opportunities as boys. Refugee children, children of minority groups should have the same rights as all others. Children with disabilities should be given the same possibility to lead a decent life as the rest.

The best interests on the child:

Children - especially when very young - are vulnerable and need special support to be able to enjoy their rights in full. How should children be granted equal rights and at the same time the necessary protection? Part of the answer lies in the principle of the best interest of the child, formulated in article 3:1:

"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

Whenever official decisions are taken which affect children, their interests should be seen as important. In other words, the interests of the parents or the state should not be the only and all-essential consideration. This is indeed one of the major messages, if not the key point, of the convention. But, admittedly, this point is not easy to implement. It is not precise in the sense that you would know instantaneously and exactly how the best interests of the child will affect a decision in a particular, and perhaps complicated, case. But the spirit of this article, the best interests of the child, should prevail, and this is perhaps easier to grasp. More weight should be placed on the side of the children when decisions are to be made about children, by government or by other authorities. More priority more understanding, more support to children is required in the daily decision-making of society and community-and within the family as well. The best interests of the child could be a starting point for many an important discussion. If you want to find out what is best for the child, it is important to gain extended, and probably often also new, knowledge.

The views of the child:

One way to gain new knowledge is by trying to listen to children themselves and to understand them better. Which would take us to the next major principle. Article 12:1 deals with the listening to the child and respecting the views of the child:

"State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

It is relevant here to mention that the article done not mean that children should begin to take over decision-making in the family, community or society. But children are human beings in their own rights, and we as

adults should see them as such, not as parent's property or belongings to legal guardians. Children have reactions, opinions, wishes and aspirations like all other human beings. They should have the rights to express what they feel and be given a listening. If we find that an opinion of a child is not reasonable or practical, we should at least respect the child so much that we allow her or him to hear our arguments against that opinion. I would say that if we all took this article of the convention seriously and followed it consistently, there would be a deep change in the whole perception of the child in society - and perhaps of the entire society as well!

The right to survival and development:

The fourth and final major principle can be defined as the *right to life*. Article 6:2 goes further than just granting children the right not to be killed, it includes the right to survival and to development:

"State parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child."

The word "survival" is unusual in human rights treaties. The purpose behind the use of the this phrase is to introduce a *dynamic* aspect to the right to life; including the need for preventive action such as immunization.

The term "development" relates to the individual child and should be interpreted in a broad sense. It adds a *qualitative* dimension to the article. Not only physical health is intended but also mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

Article 6 could be seen as the platform for all other articles in the Convention dealing with economic, social and cultural rights for children. The term "the maximum extent possible" implies a recognition that implementation requires resources and that certain measures may not be possible for poorer countries or countries affected by conflicts. At the same time, the formulation indicated that consideration and priority has to be given to this aspect.

and to put children rights higher on the agenda of UN agencies and national and international NGOs working for Afghanistan.

For maximum utilization of resources and for the planning of the seminar in relation to CRC, a committee comprising of the well-experienced and specialist people was formed four month before the seminar. With at least two meetings per month, the planning committee could take timely decisions and make all necessary arrangements for the seminar. As part of the arrangements for the seminar twenty persons from the senior staff of the specialized organizations including CCA members received a five days training on CRC at Radda Barnen office who then, facilitated group works during the seminar. Thirteen children which were selected from three schools were specially trained to participate in the seminar. The training was conducted by CCA and Radda Barnen staff over two weeks. The presence of the children and their contribution to the debate during the seminar was most impressive and fully admired by the participants.

Coming from different cities of Afghanistan including Kabul, Mazar, Herat, Jalalabad, Bamyan, as well as from Pakistani cities and even from European Countries, more than 80 people attended the seminar. They were from different walk of society whose works were, somehow, concerned with children. Almost two third of the participants was constituted from children and women.

2. Opening Ceremony:

The seminar started at 10 o'clock with recitation of some verses from the Holy Koran by Mr. Ramatullah Mazari.

Speaking on behalf of the host, the Director of CCA, Mr. Sarwar Hosaini welcomed participants and explained why the rights of the child had been taking so seriously by CCA.

Mr. Francis Okelo, Deputy Head of the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan officially opened the Seminar. He urged participants not to unduly engage in a dry academic and legal exercises, but to try to contribute to the well being of the Afghan child.

The problem of reservations

A problem could arise when states become signatories to the convention while adding a reservation. Under Article 51 it is possible for a State Party to reserve itself on an aspect of the convention. In principle, the government is not obliged to implement the convention on the point. However a reservation shall not be permitted if it is incompatible with the object and purpose of the convention (Article 51:2). A number reservations have been made, some of them of a general nature. As I mentioned earlier, Afghanistan is one of the countries having make a reservation.

In Afghanistan's case the reservation reads as follows:

"The government of the Republic of Afghanistan reserves the right to express, upon ratifying the convention, reservations on all provisions of the convention that are incompatible with the laws of Islamic Shariah, and the local legislation in effect."

I would leave it the participants in this seminar to judge as to whether this reservation is *"incompatible with the object and purpose of the convention"* or not. No doubt, it is general in its nature. I would also like you to consider the reservation's statement that the government *...reserves the right to express reservations on all provisions of the convention that are incompatible with ... the local legislation in effect.* Does this statement really comply with Article 4 of the convention? Article 4 says, namely, that

"State Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measurers for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention..."

Personally, I find it difficult to see these two statements as compatible. I would request the participants to look closer at this matter during the next three days. May I also point here to a statement made at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna regarding reservations; it recommended that State Parties review them with the aim of their repeal.

Again, if reservations are deemed necessary, they should be precise and focused.

Monitoring the convention

What procedures are there to monitor the implementation of the CRC? There is no straight-forward enforcement agency in place, no international court which can punish those who commit violations against the convention. There is however an elected United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in place, based in Geneva and with ten elected members, which is monitoring the implementation in the countries that have ratified the convention. The procedures laid down in the convention call for state parties to submit a first implementation report within two years after ratification. (This means that Afghanistan's report was actually due in April 1996.) the committee has issued special guidelines for reporting. It is important to mention here that NGOs are also welcome to furnish the Committee with reporting and information. The committee has also often invited a few selected NGOs on the basis of their written information to take part in preparatory meetings on the relevant country reports. Guidelines also exist for so-called Alternative Reports by NGOs. Radda Barnen would be willing to provide more information regarding the issue of NGOs reporting to the committee, should there be an interest in the matter among Afghan NGOs.

At the end of the process, the Committee agrees on concluding observations which are a statement of the committee's findings. This document is public. The intention is that it should be widely published in the country concerned and form a basis for discussions on how to improve the enforcement of the provisions of the convention. Here, again, there is an important role to be performed by NGOs.

If I should dare to summarize in a few words the essence of children's rights as enshrined in the convention, I would say the following:

To Conclude:

The convention does not make the traditional mistake of seeing childhood merely as a training period for any "real" life, assumed only to begin when

the individual is grown up. Instead, the convention acknowledges that every day of life, from the day of birth, is important and that childhood has a value in itself. This is why every child should be respected. And the child will be respected if we consider the best interests of the child in every decision that we make. We assess the best interests of the child better if we allow ourselves to listen to the children. We should have a holistic perspective when we deal with development issues with the child in focus, and we should work without discrimination. This is basically what the convention and the whole issue of children's rights is about. It is as simple, or as difficult, as that.

Ladies and gentlemen, the true significance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be determined by the degree to which it becomes more generally known and to what extent it forms the basis for political and popular interventions and other action concerning children. For that reason it is important that its content is spread and understood among the public at large, not the least among the younger generations. CCA's initiative to organize this seminar, as well as your presence here, is a contribution towards achieving this goal.

Thank you all for your attention.

POVERTY ACCOMPANIED BY ABSENCE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND LACK OF BASIC EDUCATION CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS GROSS VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN



By
Nassim Jawad,
Technical Advisor, NOVIB

It was spring 1990. Hopes were high among many Afghans, then living as refugees in Pakistan, that the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from their country will eventually lead to peace and that they will be able to return to their homes.

The class room in a refugee collected the papers, only one child had made a drawing on a house with children. The teacher distributed papers and pencils to the children and asked them to draw pictures of what they would like to be in future.

When the teacher collected the papers, only one child had made a drawing on a house with a garden and a man working in the fields. All others had filled their papers with Mujahedin armed with kalashinkovs and rocket launchers, tanks, armored vehicles, airplanes and similar objects. 'If you all want to become fighters, pilots and tank drivers, how will you feed yourselves?' asked the teacher. 'We have our ration cards!' was the core of voice by the children.

Indeed, many of these and other children grew into fighters and have made up the magnitude of the younger generation, now actively involved in the armed conflict.

A whole generation has been denied of appropriate education and a second generation is undergoing a similar fate. The little education available has been highly political and thousands of children have been politicized through organized political and military training programs by various factions, often under the cover of education.

Those who could not make it as fighters, but have meanwhile lost their ration cards, have become beggar and street children in Pakistan and Afghanistan itself. Child crime has risen in Pakistan dramatically where many Afghan children are involved. Several Afghan organizations and Pakistani authorities have reported on the growing number of Afghan children in prisons. Deteriorating economic situation has forced many families to send their children on the streets, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Thus child labor has become a common practice.

Like all other social sectors, the education system in Afghanistan has, almost entirely, collapsed. Majority of refugee families in Pakistan and Iran can no longer afford to send their children to schools.

While kalashinkov culture is widely common among the younger generation, mainly as the last resort to survival, the perspectives for the

next generation is even grimmer. Social and cultural values have been replaced with political and military values, caused by the collapse of the entire social and economic structures.

Over the last sixteen years, the world community has paid sufficient attention to the political and military matters of Afghanistan and has tried to shape the future of the war torn country. However, little or no attention has been paid with regard to the players of the future state.

Like Afghan communities and their political and military leaders, the world community is equally responsible for the present situation in Afghanistan and its future perspectives. All together, they have ignored the basic human rights of the communities in general, and of children in particular. The "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" of 1948 which provides the basis to guarantee economic, social and cultural rights to all members of the communities include:

the rights to social security;
the rights to food;
the rights to health car; and
the rights to education.

Vast majority of children in Afghanistan and refugees outside Afghanistan are deprived of these basic rights.

As a development organization, NOVIB believes that while development is increasingly the realization of human rights will, therefore, also contribute to development.

In case of Afghanistan, poverty, accompanied by absence of social and economic structures and lack of basic education, seems to be contributing towards gross violation of children rights. As a result of poverty, children have been marginalized, deprived of their basic rights and parents are powerless to organize and defend themselves and their children.

Therefore, one of the first and most urgent measure, in order to combat the present gross violation of children's rights in Afghanistan, seems to be alleviation of poverty. Accompanied by a longer-term development

strategy towards self-sufficiency and self-determination, national and international intervention is needed to combat poverty, as a first step. The main important aspect of such a strategy, of course, is the right of children to education.

While NOVIB is not a human right organization, just as it is not an environmental organization or a women's organization, it views human rights as an instrument for development, and not as a goal in itself. As the future of any nation relies on its future generation, realization of the basic rights of children, as the main actors of the future is a fundamental part of the any longer-term development strategy.

NOVIB endorses and promotes the values and standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and seeks partners who share this range of ideas and ideals. However, it works with respect for cultures and social values of communities it works with, and in dialogue with their cultures. Therefore, while human rights standards are universal, there are differences in details and implementation with regard to culture, religion, history, etc. Such details and implementation procedures remain subject of a continuing dialogue between NOVIB and its partners.

Based on the principal of non-interference in social and cultural values of partner organization and respect for other cultures, NOVIB works with over 150 human rights organizations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In addition, it has cooperated with a large number of development organizations with human rights components in these countries.

Projects with elements of people's education and training of local leaders in human rights issues, including techniques of legal assistance; support to promote popular movements within the organizations and institutions involved in human rights; exchange of information and experience at national, regional and international levels; support for political and economic refugees and minority groups to choose their own development models; and support to organizations who monitor human rights violations in the developing countries are, but few examples of NOVIB cooperation.

The rights to equality, justice, well-being and welfare for all are anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For NOVIB, these rights

are the vital and essential elements of a just development, towards self-reliance and self-determination of communities.

To achieve this goal, NOVIB has chosen to support social development programs including the self-organization of the poor and the marginalized groups, such as children; human resource development among target groups and those working closely with these groups; influencing national and international policies in favor of the poor and marginalized through analysis and lobbying activities at local, national and international levels.

NO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERPETRATORS IN AFGHANISTAN



By
Professor Shamim Akhtar,
Head of Afghanistan Committee,
AI, Karachi, Pakistan

fghanistan presents a spectacle of human rights catastrophe, with women and children being the worst sufferers owing to their vulnerability. The country's constitution guarantees fundamental rights to women but it was suspended in April 1992 when the west backed Mujahedeen seized power. Since then the armed groups have been fighting one another for the control of the country and the four-year infighting has taken a toll of 25,000 lives. The rival militias have been bombing the civilian population of Kabul indiscriminately, killing tens of hundreds of unarmed people including women and children. Even in the interludes between the fighting the harassed citizens got little respite since commanders and armed guards of rival militias went on rampage, plundering the residents, killing the people, raping and kidnapping women and children and taking hostages for ransom.

There was no accountability for the perpetrators of these inhuman atrocities and "the Amnesty International has not identified a single case

where armed guards have even been reprimanded by the faction leader for involvement in abuses" (Note 1). The provisional government and the armed militias of all ethnic, sectarian or political persuasions did not - do not - feel bound by any legal or moral code and they all acted as outlaws. There may not be any constitution at the time but Afghanistan is a member of the United Nations and a signatory to the Geneva Conventions and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is, therefore, under international obligation to observe and ensure the provisions of these instruments. The Amnesty International Council in its decision 23 considers the rights of the child an integral part of human rights and has directed its executive committee (IEC) and sections to "actively encourage governments to respect the terms of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child aimed at combating violations covered by Amnesty International's mandates" (Note 2).

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child enjoins upon the state parties to ensure protection to children who are affected by armed conflict. At the same time it prohibits the recruitment of children below 15 into the armed forces (Note 3), torture (Note 4), cruel punishment (note 5), sexual abuse (Note 6), child labor (Note 7) or sale (Note 8), abduction or deprivation of his or her liberty (note 9). In the long-running Afghan civil war all these rights have been violated by all sides with impunity. Amnesty International teams have thoroughly investigated the massive abuse of human rights in Afghanistan in general and of those of women and children in particular. Some of these are as follows:

During the lull in bombing in Kabul in 1994, a women went out to bring some food for her three children and was grabbed by two Mujahedeen guards and taken to a house where she was gang raped by twenty two men. When she was allowed to go home, who found that her two children had died of hypothermia (note 10). The armed groups killed many civilians for different motives such as sectarian, racial, political or personal. Many women and children were killed because they resisted abduction or rape (Note 11).

A man's home was raided in Farah province in June 1994 and he was shot dead in front of his wife and four small children. His crime was that he

Nassim Jawad, Development Consultant of NOVIB, delivered a statement on behalf of NOVIB which followed by the address of Amnesty International representative Mr. Prof. Shamim Akhtar, Head of Afghanistan Committee of AI Karachi Group.
Keynote address was presented by Mr. Jorgen Persson, Representative of Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children) in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Placing CRC at the core of his speech, Mr. Persson touched on some crucial issues regarding the implementation of CRC in Afghanistan.

The last speaker at the opening ceremony was Mr. Jan Scalton, Education Program Officer of UNICEF who gave an emotional address in which pointed out several questions about the situation of Afghan children and asked the participants to try to find out the answers.

Mr. Habibullah Rafi, Head Publication Section of CCA and Ms. Freshta Omari, Coordinator of Women Program were Program announcers at the opening ceremony while speeches were being translated from English into Persian and visa versa by Mr. Abdul Ahad Aziz and Mr. Taj Mali.

The seminar also received messages from Kabul University, Ministry of Education and Aschaina which were read at the intervals between the speeches.

3. Workshops:

With Mr. Nassim Jawad in the chair, the afternoon session of the first day of the seminar started at 2:00 p.m. According to the Program, Dr. Farid Bazgar and Dr. Ali Lalee presented their papers on the subject of the rights of the child to survival. They, then, respectively answered the questions which were put to them by the floor.

After presentations, the chairman having explained the procedure of group works to the participants asked them to choose and join one of the six working groups. Expatriates and children formed separate groups.

In general each working group had the following tasks before them:

1. to read the main articles of CRC relating to the topic of each working group,

taught girls at the village school! (Note 12). In Mujahedeen's code of ethics, teaching the girls seems to be an offense punishable with death.

In mid 1993 the Hezb-e-Wahdat militiamen took away a former army officer and six of his children from his home. His remaining children could not be traced since then (Note 13).

Three members of the family of a former government official of Afghanistan, Dr. Saleh Mohammad Zeray, his wife, Hajera Zeray, their eight-year-old daughter Jamila, and 12-year-old son Arsala, were found dead in their Kabul flat, with their throats cut. Dr. Zeray had been living in exile in Peshawar. The motive for the murders in obvious. It was political since no property had been looted (Note 14).

While all children are targeted, the girl child is exposed to both rape and murder. It is a common occurrence that the commanders just catch the girls after raiding their family homes and either marry them against their consent or rape them. Some even sell them for money. In February 1995 a commander in Mazar-e-Sharif asked the parents to give away their teen age daughter in marriage to him. He threatened to kill them if they did not do so. The parents, who had earlier refused, submitted to his order (Note 15).

Even unborn babies were not spared as a decomposed body of the pregnant women was found in March 1995 in a mass grave in an irrigation ditch three hundred meters from the road linking Charasyab and Kabul (Note 16).

The commanders of Hezb-e-Islami held eight prisoners, including two teen age boys, Mir Wais 16, and Mahmood 14, during November-December 1986 and kept them all in Shamshatoo in Pakistan territory and Wardak prisons in Afghanistan. Upon the complaint of the family members of the detainees Pakistani police secured the release of four of them but had to surrender them when three to four hundred Afghan militiamen threatened them with dire consequences. Finally, however, Pakistani authorities failed to rescue the eight prisoners who continue to be missing (Note 17).

Abduction of children of both sexes is very common. In two raids on the house of Asadullah Wakilzadeh on September 20 and 22, 1993 by militiamen reportedly belonging to Jamiet-e-Islami, his three sons, Rahmatullah, aged 15, Ahmadzadeh, aged 13 and Mustafa, aged 11, were abducted (Note 18).

The citizens of Kabul had been living under siege in early 1994 and were often shot when they stepped out of their house to bring food or water. Two young girls had gone to a corner shop in the Bibi Mahroo district of Kabul. They never returned home and their dead bodies with heads battered, and faces swollen were discovered in the debris of a building (Note 19).

A 12-year-old child had gone out with a bucket to fetch some water. He was shot dead by a sniper and when his mother ran to save him, she too was killed, with their corpses lying there (Note 20).

In Microroayan, in mid-1992, the Mujahedeen guards raided the house of a family to kidnap their daughter, Nahid a 16-year-old high school girl. Rather than submit to them, she ran upstairs and jumped from the fifth floor of the apartment building to save her honor (Note 21).

A 13-year-old girl was allegedly abducted by the Hezb-e-Islami militiamen on the order of their commander who kept her forcibly with him until he got killed in action, a blessing in disguise for the girl since she regained her freedom and returned home (Note 22).

The Afghan refugees who returned home from Iran or Pakistan after the establishment of the Mujahedeen government, had found themselves as insecure as before. A family returning to their home in Farah in early 1994 was visited by a commander of Jamiet-e-Islami and his armed guards. Not content with his three wives, the white-bearded commander sought to marry the 15-year-old girl of that family when her brother did not agree to the unsuitable match, he was shot by the guards and the girl taken away (Note 23).

A school girl, Farida, was taken away by a Hezb commander from her home in the presence of her parents and was never heard of (Note 24).

An eyewitness reported the abduction of twelve-and-thirteen-year-old boys from the basement of an apartment block in Kabul during January 1994 (Note 25).

The artillery attacks on the residential areas of Kabu have caused widespread death and destruction. Sometime the residents of affected areas had nothing to eat. A 6-year-old girl, who was seriously ill, died for want of food and medicine since the family was holed up in the basement and could not go out due to a heavy barrage of fire (Note 26).

Another family lost two children in the bomb attack as their parents ran downstairs for shelter. The boys, who remained upstairs, were driven into the ground by the force of a bomb (Note 27).

After the fall of Kabul, the victorious Taleban militia has succeeded in maintaining law and order in the capital and through out the territory under its control. However, the Taleban guards are reportedly harassing the people. They break into homes and destroy whatever they consider un Islamic such as tape recorders, cassettes, magazines and toys. In one such case, they seized the musical toy from 8-year-old boy, smashed it and then slapped him (Note 28).

One can go on narrating the horrendous crimes committed by the commanders and warlords who claim to be fighters in the way of Allah. These crimes must not go unpunished and public opinion should be mobilized for holding an impartial inquiry into the above-mentioned excesses. The Amnesty International has called for maintenance of strict controls over the Mujahedeen forces in order to penalize those who are guilty of human rights violations. It holds the US, Western Europe, former Soviet Union and CIS, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan responsible for the human rights abuses because they have supplied arms to the warring factions. It enjoins upon these states to ensure that the arms supplied to them will not be used against unarmed civilians. It urges these governments to take concerted action to stop the human rights violations (Note 29).

The UN should see to it that its Special Mission to Afghanistan and its Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan exchange relevant information and the UN Secretary General include human rights violations in his special report to the General Assembly and the Security Council (Note 30).

The UN should implement its resolution 49/207 which enjoins it to help draft a constitution for Afghanistan which should guarantee human rights (Note 31). The Amnesty International holds the governments responsible for human rights violations committed by their own forces or by armed groups which are associated with them or work at their instance (Note 32). It calls upon the Afghan government and rival factions to observe the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Convention which accords protection to noncombatants and those who have laid down their arms. The customary international law and treaties such as International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantee the right to life and prohibit torture and cruel and degraded punishment must be respected. It must be made clear to the Afghan factions that the Amnesty is totally opposed to death penalty which is cruel and inhuman.

The human rights groups should impress upon all the parties in Afghanistan to prohibit child labor, torture of children and their separation from their parents. It is important that an awareness of human rights be created in the Afghan population through education and mass media and international recognition of the political entity there be accorded on the condition that it fulfill its obligation under the international law.

The Amnesty International has declared in clear and unmistakable terms that "it takes no position with respect to the cultural, political or religious values which underlie administrative structures or judicial systems" (Note 33). The statute of Amnesty as amended in 1995 says, Amnesty International shall at all times make clear its impartiality as regards countries adhering to the different world political ideologies and groupings" (Note 34).

Therefore, the Amnesty has no preference for any party in the Afghan conflict. However, it insists on the observance of human rights including those of women and children by all parties. To prevent the fighting, it has proposed the imposition arms embargo on Afghanistan by the

international community. Pakistan also called for this measure at the UN General Assembly meeting recently but it received a lukewarm response from the big powers. The USA, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia have great influence upon the Mujahedeen factions and they can persuade them to abide by the international humanitarian law during the armed conflict. The Amnesty International wants to involve the OIC to bring to bear upon the parties moral pressure for compliance with the human rights principles and international conventions.

Endnotes

1. *Amnesty International, Afghanistan: International Responsibility for Human Rights Disaster (London: Amnesty International, 1995), P7.*
2. *1995 ICM Report (ORG 52/02/95): Decisions of the 1995 Council, P64.*
3. *Article 38 International Convention on the Rights of the Child.*
4. *Article 37 ibid*
5. *Article 35 ibid*
6. *Article 34 ibid*
7. *Article 32 ibid*
8. *Article 35 ibid*
9. *Article 37 ibid*
10. *Amnesty International, Afghanistan, Op cit, P1.*
11. *Ibid, P36*
12. *Ibid, P43*
13. *Ibid, P58*
14. *Ibid, P39*
15. *Ibid, P44*
16. *Ibid, PP47-48*
17. *Ibid, PP52-54*
18. *Ibid, P59*
19. *Amnesty International, Women in Afghanistan: A Human Rights Catastrophe (London: Amnesty International, 1995), P5.*
20. *Ibid, P5*
21. *Ibid, P6*
22. *Ibid, P7*
23. *Ibid,*
24. *Ibid, P8*
25. *Ibid, P9*
26. *Ibid, P14*
27. *Ibid,*
28. *Amnesty International, News Service 175/96 (London: October 2, 1996)*
29. *Amnesty International, Afghanistan, Op cit, P71*
30. *Ibid, P82*
31. *Ibid,*
32. *Ibid, P78*
33. *Ibid, P69*

SEEING CHILD RIGHTS IN WIDER PERSPECTIVE OF HUMAN RIGHTS



Inaugural Remarks By

Mr. Jan Scalton,
Education Program Officer of UNICEF

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by expressing our gratitude to CCA, both for initiating this seminar and for involving and inviting UNICEF and Save the Children amongst others in the preparation. It goes without saying that, being the initiators of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the CRC, UNICEF is welcoming the participation of all organizations that can effectively contribute to the realization of child rights.

Under normal circumstances Afghanistan would have hod to prepare a monitoring report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1996, two years after ratification. It is clear that present circumstances are not conducive for such an exercise. In many countries however, the Governments' official reports is not the only report. NGOs can play an important role in preparing and submitting an independent report, with observations that do not have to reflect the official governments position. Such an independent NGO report can be a very valuable contribution to the UN Monitoring Committee for the CRC.

Apart from monitoring and changing the laws as they affect children, to make them in line with the provisions of the Convention, governments have a duty to inform the citizens about the Rights of the Child, being one simple way of promoting these rights. Again, awareness creation has unfortunately not received the attention it needs in Afghanistan. Again, NGOs can play a major role in awareness creation and I sincerely hope that the CCA initiative to organize this seminar will be a major stepping stone in a much wider move to discuss rights of children.

The concept that children have rights is of course not restricted to children alone and I would certainly encourage you to see the Rights of the Child in the wider perspective of Human Rights. This includes also the right of women not to be discriminated. In private, Afghan men have expressed to me their concern about the fact that their daughters' education has been put to a stop and that even their sons go without education because the teachers, a majority of them women, are no longer allowed to work. Also, many Afghans who have taken refuge abroad, would like to see much better health and educational facilities in Afghanistan, to facilitate the return of their families.

It may well be exactly the Afghans who currently live abroad who may end up making a difference in a post war situation. There is little doubt in my mind that any change will have to come from within the Afghan community. The outside world may be supportive, but there also is a tradition of resisting perceived foreign influence. So the role of NGOs like CCA and I hope many other community organizations in the future, will be to stimulate the discussion on what kind of society you want for Afghanistan. Even though there is a large consensus in the world about

rights, the realization of those rights in individual countries is very much subject to internal discussion and decision making. What is the future you want for your own children? What do you think is best for the children of Afghanistan? What will help the children of Afghanistan realize their rights to survive? Do you believe that education for boys and for girls is a right? What can you do to make this right come true for the children of Afghanistan?

I do not know what recollection you have of your own childhood. Do you feel that you grew up as a child with all things that are common to children? Were you allowed to be a child? Or were you a premature adult? We seem to have a tendency to pass on our own experiences onto those who follow us. But do we ever stop to examine our own childhood to determine what is worth passing on and what had best be left behind? Maybe it is this examination of our own childhood that will help us understand the very basic concept of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, namely "what is in the best interest of the child?" When we grew up, we did not know what the future would bring us. I am sure all of us have seen tremendous change in our life time. The one thing that is certain is that the children of today will see even more change in their life time. The question is, what kind of baggage will we give them as they start their journey though life. Do we load them with hatred or with love, with weapons or with knowledge, with narrow ideas or with an open mind, as mute followers or with the confidence to express themselves?

I leave you with so many questions and no answers at all. I do hope that your debate over the coming days will lead to more discussion by a wider group of people, to more groups that can contribute to awareness creation, to a better understanding of the issues involved, and I would expect in particular that the seminar will lead to an action agenda that will make a difference for children. I wish you success in your efforts, the children of Afghanistan deserve it. Thank you.

Part III

Presentations

FIGHTING MAKE CHILDREN CHOOSE BETWEEN BAD AND WORSE



by
Mr. Sadeq Kazemi
Assistant Director CCA

Translated into English by: Mr. M. Saeed Zwak, Quetta

Respected Chairperson, dear guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Prior to anything else, I thank you for your participation in this seminar on the rights of the children of Afghanistan. I feel pride to be in front of each distinguished people who in this most critical time have gathered to discuss the child's rights in Afghanistan and to seek solutions and practical strategies for the innocent and vulnerable children of Afghanistan.

2. to find problems faced by Afghan children relating to this topic + write on flip chart (brainstorming),
3. the rapporteur then puts the main points on cards for plenary,
4. to identify allies + potentials for improvement,
5. the rapporteur then writes the main points on cards for plenary,
6. to develop strategy (immediate + long term) to address those problems identified + put them on cards.

Before starting:

- to elect rapporteur.
- to elect time keeper (propose to the group how much time for each question + monitor it).

Findings of the working groups were presented at the plenary session and approved with miner changes by the session.

Ms. Angela Kearney, Program Manager SC/UK in Afghanistan, chaired the morning session of the second day of the seminar in which Dr. S. Amirshah Hassanyar presented his paper in Connection with the Rights of the Child to Development. His presentation was followed by group works and again plenary meeting was held which discussed the results of the group works.

Mr. Muhammad Saeed Zhwak, Project Officer, SC/USA in Quetta, Dr. Farzana and Ms. Qadria Yazadan Parast, chairperson of the High Association of Afghan Women were chairpersons of the third, fourth and fifth sessions of the seminar respectively. Ms. Mahbuba Hoquqmal, former Dean Faculty of Law, Kabul University and Mr. Sadiq Kazemi Assistant Director of CCA had presentations on the rights to participation and protection.

At the last session before the closing ceremony, participants were asked to look at their recommendation once again and this time from practical point of view and place them each in one of the three categories which are: what can be done now? which points need advocacy? and what to be considered in longer term?

Dear Guests, The gathering of international personalities, representatives of international and local NGOs, representatives of the Jehad parties, Pakistani brothers proves the re-commitment to the Convention of the Rights of the Child signed in 1989 by the majority of the world's countries. When we see that our participants come here while having such attending the seminar for Afghan children, it is a step towards the implementation of the Convention and gives us happiness and pride.

Today in the world, especially in many developed countries, children enjoy the protection of the law more than any other groups in societies. Governments and institutions have provided pre and post-natal care for children who are the future wealth of the country. As children are vulnerable, they should be well protected. We wish that our children would also achieve such a development. Children are the builders of tomorrow and their protection guarantees the development and prosperity of tomorrow. But this dream will come true, only, when a central legal government and law comes to power. This power will serve to speed the process. There is no doubt that those children who enjoy a central government can achieve their rights sooner than those who are deprived of a central government.

It is a sad fact, that in Afghanistan the monster of war has fiercely attacked the different aspect of people's lives. Human rights are encroached upon everyday in new way. Cruelty rules highly over all the people, including children. Those in power feel neither Islamic nor international responsibility.

The warlords think only of fighting and victories over the rivals without any considerations or responsibility to the outcome of their conflicts. Sometimes children's schools are converted to armed posts, and in other area, with a different excuse, they close kindergartens and orphanages; in other areas, in order to control a town they bring a city and its citizens under rockets and bombs. All these atrocities happen in different times and continuously as a result many children and women are killed and those who remain alive are caught and surrounded by such circumstances.

The fighting made children choose between bad and worse, i.e., either to remain under bombing and accept psychological traumas or flee the country and accept the life in exile with poverty and wanderings. The destruction of educational facilities is another form of children's direction to slavery and ignorance. A slavery that is not visible that slowly strikes at the minds of our children which can not be heard. But anyway, the minds remain vacant of knowledge. Wisdom is a gift of God for human-beings. When the children are deprived of this gift and when fighting replaces knowledge and hatred replaces love and respect, doesn't it clearly show a denial of the rights of children? In the last 18 years of war in the country, children have either participated in the war due to poverty or because of their unawareness they were used in armed conflicts.

During the last 18 years, education in Afghanistan moved downwards in contrast to natural development. According to Interim operation strategy, Note for the United Nations in Afghanistan for the 1996-7 Biennium, "in Afghanistan the number of primary schools reduced from 3500 in 1976 to 600 in 1990. Four per cent girls and 27 % boys go to primary schools."

It should be mentioned that these statistics were compiled prior to the latest political changes and therefore not include the new restrictions on education, especially for girls. The 18 years of war has been an obstacle against the development of education, but still the enthusiasm regarding education exists. The internal conflicts between warring factions have caused the schools to remain closed but not for the reason of continued interest of Afghans in education. It is a fact that among other motives encouraging Afghans to support education, religious motive is at the top. And, maybe, few parents have not heard of the Hadith "to gain knowledge is compulsory for all, men and women". Religious motives are very strong ones among Afghans. Those beliefs should not be misused to encourage closing schools. Each Afghan family feels guilty that they have not been able to send their children to schools and try their best to compensate for this.

The continual war has created lots of economic problems and children have suffered a lot because of poverty. These days, because of war, many of the schools have become abandoned. Also in those areas where the schools are functioning, people are not able to send their children to

schools. Some of the parents do not send their children to school due to their concern about the war and unclear future. Others refuse schools in the belief that their children will become irreligious or infidels. The continuation of this situation encourages parents to force their children to sell their labor to make a living. A part of this problem can be solved by NGOs staff beside their main activities and explain children's right to education to the people using religious quotations regarding education. An aid agency, while it needs financial resources to construct a school, it also needs the support of local community to ensure the continuation of education in that building.

The sensitization of people about children is a way of securing children's rights. People will only become sensitive toward children when they labor for them. People will labor easily when they believe this is God's order. The problem here is the opposite; many people believe and think that God has banned girls and women from schooling. For those people who think this way, NGOs can build schools for them. But its important how they can change such thinking. It seems the energy that is required for building is the same as is needed for cultural enlightenment to change the basic thinking of the people to ensure the continuation of school in a community.

The consideration of the rights of children is a principle. Therefore this principle should be brought into action. The children should be given the chance to participate with adults in life affairs. They should be included in the decisions made for them and be consulted. If possible children have to participate and to be asked their views in regard to the activities related to them. It is true children may not be fully able to make proper decisions, but it is their right to be gradually and eventually involved in decisions to the extend possible. At the same time they should be properly guided. The exercise of their rights to participate in social and economic affairs increases their decision making power. Unfortunately, many parents are found to be impatient and reluctant to provide opportunities for their children to participate in different decisions made about their children. Instead of explaining and guiding their only response is "be quiet, you do not understand, when you are adult, you will be aware." In such behavior, not only the child's right to participation is denied and not convinced, but the child is accused of not understanding. This is especially difficult when

children ask from adults with emotion and expectations. By violent answer from adults, telling them "this is none of your business", children feel depressed and discouraged. In a holy verse Almighty Allah has said " All human beings are given dignity and honor." which means all Muslim, non-Muslims, minority, majority, men, women, boys and girls. The humans' nature requires respect to the needs and wants of other human beings. Likewise, we have the right to know and make decisions. All others have the same rights as much as they are able to participate and understand. As respecting parents is obligatory on children according to Islamic rules, likewise it is the responsibility of parents to their children to let them participate.

The purpose of children's rights is to find practical ways to help children which is barely observed in Afghanistan. It is true that financial assistance has an important role in this process. But the important question is how to enlighten masses about children's rights and practice them? How can they be supported by potential source of common sense? Which way can lead to effective protection of children, specially orphans and street children? The most possible way is supporting them by feeling, kindness, and sentiment that are part of human-being, so this feeling must be stimulated by every possible manner. How nice it is when we hear that schools, security, entertainment facilities, parks, etc. are available for children in any where and five thousands uniformed children attend to classes every morning. The news about children suffering from various violations like as, labor for food in streets, child hostage taking, kidnapping, trafficking, and abuse injured everyone's feeling.

This feeling must be lead towards child protection. Radios, dailies, TVs, famous periodical and magazines must emphasize the children issues in Afghanistan and sensitize people about children.

Expression of feeling is a potential way of child protection, but how we can realize it to an effective action? How we can approach to a better understanding of issues involved and contribution of more people?

The answer to this question is another way of helping children and it is hoped that it is to be found in this seminar during the discussions and conclusions.

TRANQUILLITY AND CARE OF CHILD HEALTH



By

DR. Mohd. Farid Bazger
ORA International

First of all, my thanks to CCA staff for inviting me to join this seminar and giving me the opportunity to say something about 'Tranquillity and Care of child health.'

Children are the majority of population, especially in developing countries. In the world for every 10, people 3 are under 16 years. 45% of the Afghan population are children. So, if we care about their health today, we will have a healthy society tomorrow because today's children makes the future. They are the owners of the 21st century. But unfortunately, the morbidity and mortality rates are very high among children. In developing countries annually 13 million children die because of very simple curable and preventable diseases.

In our war afflicted country, besides war calamities, according to UNDCP 1992 report children's mortality rate in Afghanistan was 80/1000. This is a very high percentage in the world. According to a UNICEF report, just 70% of newborns reach 5 years of age in Afghanistan.

Health is not only despairing of illness. When we speak about health its means complete well-being, physical , psychological and social conditions. But unfortunately, because of war inside of Afghanistan, and bad refugee condition out side of Afghanistan the present and the next generation of Afghans will face very strange and complicated psychological problems on their future.

The other problem which affects Afghan children's health is incorrect medical practice. There is no safe source or place for Afghan parents to bring their sick child for treatment. There are a variety of irresponsible doctors, Hakims, paramedics and other medical workers which Afghan children must face.

Hakims: Under name of Unani medicine they sell varieties of syrups, pills, electoral and other kinds of medical looking materials which have no medical value and made by non professional people who do not know much about modern medicine. These "medical looking" materials, instead of helping are dangerous for children. They add opium in anti diarrhea and anti cough syrups which is a dangerous material particularly for children.

Homeopathy: This appears to be a mixture of Unani and modern medicine. They mostly use steroids in their practice which causes problems for children health.

Medical science: The majority of doctors misuse injections, drips and use some other drugs without necessity. Mostly there are no weighing scales in clinics. Many of the doctors do not have a simple torch in their clinics to examine the throat.

In public clinics and hospitals, shortage of the pediatricians is felt. Medicine donated for poor children is often sold in the bazaar.

Because of the prolonged war, many NGOs produced health workers from courses ranging from two weeks to two - three years courses. These health workers with their limited medical knowledge treat all kinds of illnesses. By using of incomplete doses of antibiotics children sicknesses are prolonged and resistant strains of diseases develop. By using non sterile injections they transfer some dangerous infectious diseases such as hepatitis, AIDS and others, make buttock abscess and other problems.

Tranquillity and Care of child health and its causative factors:
Generally we can divide tranquillity and care of child health and its causative factors in three stages:

1. Before delivery or during pregnancy.
2. During delivery.
3. After delivery.

I- Before delivery or during pregnancy:

In this stage the mother's health and nutrition directly affects the child's health.
Some maternal diseases which can affect the embryo:

- Diabetes.
- Infectious diseases: such as Rubella and others.
- Syphilis.
- AIDS.
- Rh factor incompatibility.
- Chemical elements:

A. The medicines which should not be used during pregnancy and lactation: Quinolons, Chloramphinicol, Halfantrin, Salicylates, Phenobarbs, Tetracycline.

B. The medicine which should be used during pregnancy and lactation with caution: Atenlol, Antihistamine, Most benzodiasepines, Contraceptives (Estrogen containing), Ethosuximide, Nitrofurantoin, Sulfonamides (long acting), Thiazide diuretics (Long acting in high doses).

C. The medicines which are not dangerous with normal doses are Aminoglycoside antibiotics, Anti cholinergic agents, Metochlopramide, NSAI agents (Ibuprofen preferred), salicylates, Thiazide duritics (short acting).

- Problems of secretary glands: such as hypothyroidism.
- X- Rays.
- Narcotics.
- Mothers age.
- Mother's psychic problems.

II- During delivery:
This is a very dangerous phase for both mother and child. Unfortunately because of shortage of health facilities for Afghan mothers, the child's and mother's mortality rate in this stage is very high. 70- 99% of deliveries happen in homes with out the help of any professional person or midwife.

Injuries at this stage called Birth traumas, which normally associated with Asphyxia (shortage of oxygen) . Causes of birth trauma:

1. Primiparty.
2. Prolonged delivery.
3. Abnormal presentation.
4. Mother's small stature.
5. Oligo- Hydroaminosis.
6. Mother's pelvic anomalies.
7. using of forceps and vacuum extraction and etc.

Above mentioned factors may case this injuries:

1. Caput succedanum.
2. Abrosion and ecchimosis of face.
3. Subconjunctival hemorrhages.
4. Cephalo hematoma.
5. Skull fractures.
6. Intracrinial hemorrhages.

7. Spline injuries.
8. Injuries of phrenic and peripheral nerves.
9. Adrenal hemorrhages.
10. Liver injuries and other problems.

III. After delivery: We can divide this period to many stages;

A- Neonatal: From birth to one month. This period needs special care, a little carelessness can be fatal. Around 4.3 million children annually die in this period in the world, this contributes 33% of all deaths before the age of 5 years. In each hour 500 newborn die in the world, in a day it reaches up to 12000 deaths. In Asia the Neonatal mortality rate has reached to 63%, Afghanistan per capita has the highest neonatal mortality rate. In Afghanistan these factors affects Neonatal health:

- Mother's living conditions(Health, Food).
- The familial economic situation. (Poverty).
- Poor health facilities.
- No Delivery care facilities.

Major factors of Neonatal mortality rate in developing countries:

- Prematurity.
- Tetanus.
- Birth traumas.
- Respiratory infections.
- Other infections.
- Diarrhea.
- Congenital anomalies.

In order to decrease the neonatal mortality rate in Afghanistan governmental authorities, national and international NGOs should give priority to:

1. Pregnant mothers care centers.
2. Training of professional midwifes.

3. Implementation of Tetanus toxic to Pregnant mothers.
4. community education.
5. Encouraging of lactation.
6. Early case management and referring.
7. From one month to one year child health care: This is also a dangerous period for the child, ARI (Acute Respiratory Infections) and diarrhea attacks are common and these are the main cases of child mortality in this period. Because of wrong attitudes in some people and ignorance among mothers who don't know how to feed their children (especially premipars), cases of malnutrition are also high during this time. This is a good time for vaccination against some dangerous diseases (Measles, Polio, Whooping cough, Diphtheria, Tetanus)
8. From one year up to 6 years:
9. From 6 up to ten years:
10. Pre-puberty (13 years for girls and 14 years for boys.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is suggested that governmental and non governmental organizations (National and International) responsible for care of child health should give priority to these Points:

1. Immunization.
2. Providing iodized salts.
3. Encouraging people to use ORS in diarrhea cases.
4. Providing clean water and sanitation.
5. Providing vitamin A.
6. Centers of Mother and child health and safe delivery with professional staff.
7. Encouraging breast feeding.
8. Health education for the community.

4. Closing Ceremony:

A part from seminar participants, a number of interested people including NGOs directors, social figures and journalists were present at the closing ceremony. Mr. Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, Coordinator, UNOCHA. as chief guest accepted the seminar recommendations and delivered the closing address. Afterwards, Mr. Sarwar Hosaini thanked the seminar participants, particularly those who had taken the trouble to come to Peshawar from distant areas and cities.

The seminar ended with the announcement of the winners names of the contest on the paintings and writings for children. The contest was also conducted by CCA on the occasion of and parallel to the seminar. The prizes of the winners were given to them by CCA senior staff and Mr. Hassanyar, Dr. Lalee, and Mr. Allahdad.

The seminar received much coverage by mass media. Local dailies such as The News, The Frontier Post, and publications belonging to the Afghans mirrored the seminar in detail. Interviews were also made with several participants and the organizers by BBC, VOA, VOG.

TWO GENERATIONS OF AFGHANISTAN DEPRIVED OF CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Closing Address By:

Mr. Alfredo Witschi-Cestari,
Coordinator, UNOCHA

Good afternoon everybody.

Let me tell you how happy I am to be among you today. This is particularly so because, although my knowledge of Pashto and Dari is almost close to nil, during the hour I have spent with you here, I was absolutely delighted to se the stimulating interaction prevailing between all of you.

Going through the Action Points that you have just approved I have been extremely impressed by the task that you have set for yourselves. However, one can hardly expect less when we note that Afghanistan is one of the most war affected countries in this century. In this context, if there is a category of Afghans who deserve as much at4ention as possible, right



now as well as in the future, it is the one composed by the children of Afghanistan.

Today; we can say that two generations of Afghans have not enjoyed a basic right: the right to enjoy a childhood. Too many Afghan children have not had the rights to love and be loved by parents, brothers, cousins, friends and to have a normal family life. The children of Afghanistan have seldom had the right for a proper education, the right of dreaming about a future that would offer them the possibility of accomplishing something concrete on behalf of their people. They haven't had the right to properly underhand from where they come from, to what they belong to, to learn from their parents what they had learned from their own parents, to identify their place in the World.

Instead, they have had the right to run away from home in search of asylum, to lose family members, to know what war is about, to identify the noise of the threatening aircraft. They have had the right to know what to fight means, to see the effects of mines on the bodies of their victims or on themselves. The children of Afghanistan have learned what to suffer and to die mean. They know that they should focus on how to keep on surviving.

These children, today, are perhaps less at risk than in the recent past. The fighting is concentrated in few places in Afghanistan and there is no more global war. But even if the direct effects of war are less important, the children are still the victims of the consequences that over sixteen years of war have brought to Afghanistan.

Throughout the eighties and now the nineties, the children have been hearing that they should know how important it is to fight, to learn how kill and, also, what to be killed means. This situation has left behind, in addition to the physical consequences, a tremendous traumatism, in both their hearts and their minds.

Today, the children are the main victims of the millions of mines laying in mine fields all over Afghanistan. When children are not directly involved in war related activities, they seldom have other occupations but to search for wood, keep herds or simply play, often in fields plagued with mines;

there are not many playgrounds and opportunities for leisure in Afghanistan.

Thousands of Afghan children are orphans, have lost family members or have lost contact with their families. It is difficult to foresee a future for each of them; the perspectives are still bleak: the large presence of poppy fields, the production of opium and the heroin traffic they imply, constitute new threats for the young men and young women of Afghanistan and the World.

Now we note that girls are being prevented from attending school and women not allowed to work. They are therefore prevented from taking part to the peace building and reconstruction process, in many places of Afghanistan. To some extent, they are no more entitled to dream about doing something for their own country or even just for their own household.

Yet, the women constitute more than fifty per cent of the people of Afghanistan. How can one conceive the reconstruction of Afghanistan without the participation of fifty per cent of its population? Perhaps the majority of the people in Afghanistan who, during these past sixteen years, have devoted most of their energy to remain alive, to dream about and prepare for the future, is among this fifty per cent of Afghans who have spent more energy in being ready for peace than in fighting a war.

The future of Afghanistan belongs to its children, girls and boys alike. The future is in their hands, in hands that should be occupied at learning how to be useful, productive.

These children, not only have they been deprived of a childhood and of formal education, but also of the basic traditional training that their ancestors received and passed on from father to son. The fathers were not there of could not teach their sons how to sow the land, breed the cattle or craft a tool. They could not transmit the knowledge that they received from their fathers, who had themselves learned all they knew from their own fathers.

We have to get rid of the weapons hold by the hands of children, of young men and of the fathers themselves. We have to replace the kalashinkovs and other means of destruction by the tools required for the reconstruction work that Afghanistan so desperately needs.

We should now fight for the rights of the children, for their right for education, and for all the rights that children should enjoy. But we should not forget abut those other children who, in spite of their young age, have already been involved in past or current fighting. Those grown-up children who, at fifteen or even at twenty or twenty five, are still the adults of the future. They are the ones who will have the responsibility of bringing peace and reconciliation to Afghanistan. Today they only know how to fight, tomorrow they will need to know how to work, how to rebuild their country. We should give them the knowledge and the tools they need in order for them to be able to build and protect a future with peace, education and all what children need and is essential, for them to be able to prepare their own future.

Therefore, I think that you are right when you identify all those activities proposed in the final document of this seminar. But, I also think that we should immediately start taking concrete actions in order to face different problems. That are currently affecting Afghanistan.

How can we do this? It is not an easy task, but we are here to try to find solutions, no matter how difficult the problems are. We should work at the level of the refugee camp and, in Afghanistan, at the level of the local communities as well as at the regional level. But, I also think that we should work at the level of a very important group: the Afghan family.

We should empower the family, we should put the family in the driving seat. It is through the family that we will succeed to se the girls receiving proper education. I believe that in a suffering country as Afghanistan, the family has become, perhaps, the most solid an important nucleus for the preservation of Afghan traditions as well as for the advancement of its members. Each Afghan family is entitled to, not only to demand or request, but to claim for the respect of the rights of the girls and young women to go to school; they can prevent boys and young men from

devoting their lives to war or to unacceptable labor tasks. The family should help its children to be ready to become an asset for Afghanistan.

I agree with your conclusion, that the NGOs and the UN agencies should support your efforts. I believe that this support can have a key impact in the work ahead. I am convinced that we, the representatives of the International Community, United Nations' or NGOs' staff members, should help you in your endeavor. But, to be effective, you, the Afghan people, should tell us what to do. You should identify the problems but also propose the solutions. However, you should also count on our expertise and technical know how in order to define the programs that should make the best use of the support and assistance coming from abroad.

There are numerous challenges that are to be addressed in the medium or long term, but there are also priorities that are to be tackled right now. We need to find ways to take the children our of war related activities. I mean children in the very large sense, from the very young to those who are at the verge of manhood. They should know that there are other ways of living than to survive surrounded by fear, violence or destruction. They have to be thought about the importance of their lives and of their present and future role in and for Afghanistan. They should know that they have rights and that they can claim that these rights be respected.

Let me say one last word on behalf of a country that will be reshaped by the Afghans themselves; by those Afghans who believe that there is a bright future for Afghanistan: let's work together with all those Afghans who are ready to devote their lives to rebuilding an Afghan nation, where its people can reconciliate and leave in peace, ensure economic and social progress and build a law abiding society.

Thank you very much.

Part IV
Findings



ACTION POINTS FROM DELIBERATIONS OF SIX WORKING GROUPS



SURVIVAL, DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION, AND PARTICIPATION

A: WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW?

1. Prepare adults to assume ultimate responsibility for child survival and realization of child rights:

1. develop information material on CRC and related topics for authorities, communities and parents,
2. adults should provide opportunities for children to realize their vision,
3. provide communication skills training for spreading CRC messages,
4. provide leadership training,
5. utilize local folklore and tradition,
6. support mine clearance efforts,
7. distribute simple translations of CRC in Dari and Pashtu to all authorities in Afghanistan,

2. Prepare child protection laws

1. gender equity (equal opportunities for boys and girls),
2. advocate refugee rights.

3. Advocate with NGOs, UN agencies to have focal persons for CRC on every level:

1. appoint CRC focal person at each headquarters and each field office,
2. identify allies to promote and share CRC implementing responsibilities,
3. assist focal field persons to develop CRC activities,
4. carry out constructive monitoring,
5. allow children to plan activities for the International Day of the Child.

4. Re-orient education system to become child centered:

1. obtain and include children's views in children related activities - listen to smaller voices,
2. introduce participatory teaching and learning processes including seminars,
3. widen learning experiences through teacher initiatives including awareness on mines, drugs, attitudes towards disabilities,
4. share information on development of children around the world,
5. delete war images from school textbooks and classroom teaching,
6. raise awareness amongst children to respect their own cultural values and traditions,
7. honor tolerance towards all people ethic/ linguistic/ religious/ regional/ political/ gender,
8. science and technology need to be in the curriculum,

9. investigate possibilities of mobile schools,

5. Establish training especially designed for out of school children:

1. for needs of war-poisoned children,
2. non-formal education techniques including literacy and numeracy training,
3. support families in the care of orphans and where possible avoid institutionalization of orphanages.

6. Re-orient basic services including health to become child and mother centered:

1. provide community training for utilizing local products (healthy food; wheat/salt solution; etc.),
2. provide community training to make health program community based,
3. train and re-orient health personnel to emphasize basic preventive health care,
4. establish MOTHER/CHILD HEALTH clinics in rural areas,
5. provide potable water system managed by the community,

7. Re-establish family guidance centres covering:

1. health education,
2. peri-natal care,
3. birth assistance,
4. child spacing,
5. assist parents to plan their children's' futures with their children,

8. Establish support services for children and adults affected by war:

1. psycho-social centers,
2. community based care(train families to support such people).

9. Reestablish kindergartens and child care centres

1. playgrounds.

10. Recommend that CCA distribute the workshop recommendations to NGOs and UN agencies:

1. set up a procedure to follow up NGO and UN agencies reaction-acceptance and intent to implement.

B. WHICH POINTS NEED ADVOCACY?

1. Prepare adults to assume ultimate responsibility for child survival and realization of child rights:

1. bring peace and security throughout Afghanistan,
2. encourage discussion on compulsory and free primary education,
3. consider vocational training for vulnerable families including guaranteed group lending and savings schemes,
4. develop a unified school curriculum,

2. Prepare child protection laws:

1. lawyer training in the principles of the CRC.

3. Re-orient education system to become child centered:

1. include CRC in supplementary curriculum material,
2. encourage children to spread CRC messages among friends, families and communities; define mutual rights and obligations of parents and children,
3. rehabilitate education facilities to become conducive to learning,

Seminar Program

DAY I - 17 NOVEMBER:

Opening Session

09:00 - 10:00 Registration
10:00 - 10:05 Recitation from the Holy Koran
10:05 - 10:15 Welcome address -Mr. Sarwar Hosaini, Director CCA
10:30 - 10:45 Opening address - Mr. Francis Okelo, Deputy Head of Mission, UNSMA
10:45 - 11:30 Messages (NOVIB Message will be read out by Mr. Nassim Jawad, NOVIB's Development Consultant).
11:30 - 11:45 Inaugural remarks - Mr. Jan Scholten, Project Planning Officer, UNICEF
11:45 - 12:30 Key-note address - Mr. Jorgen Persson, Country Representative Pak/Afghanistan, Radda Barnen
12:30 - 13:30 Lunch and Prayer

Afternoon Session:

4. create more innovative recreational activities with the assistance/ideas of children. Train teachers accordingly,
5. ensure education includes vocational training,
6. involve children in environmental activities,

4. Establish training especially designed for out of school children:

1. for needs of children who must work to teach them skills for a more productive future,
2. for child centered training,
3. for re-integration into the education system.

5. Re-orient basic services including health to become child and mother centered:

1. agencies working with mothers should include CRC awareness and training for families.

C: LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

1. Prepare child protection laws

1. legislation (e.g. forced marriages, child marriages),
2. teacher training in the principles of CRC,
3. community leaders (including religious and secular) training in principles of CRC.

2. Re-orient education system to become child centered:

1. ensure violence free school environments,
2. create more resources for education,
3. assure children their right to realize their full potential,

4. gender equity (equal opportunities for boys and girls) including equal responsibilities for housework,
5. provide opportunities for children to contribute in producing their own reading materials,
6. provide tertiary education opportunities.

Part V

Annexes

Annex I

A: List of the Planning Committee Members

1. Angela, Ms. Kearney,
   (Save the Children - UK),
   Islamabad, Pakistan;

2. Azim, Ms. Afifa,
   (RBTU/Radda Barnen),
   Peshawar, Pakistan;

3. Aziz, Eng. Abdul Ahad,
   (Save the Children - USA),
   Islamabad, Pakistan;

4. Bente, Ms. Karlsson,
   (Radda Barnen),
   Peshawar, Pakistan;

5. Ellen, Ms. van Kalmthout,
   (UNICEF),
   Peshawar, Pakistan;

6. Hosaini, Mr. S. Sarwar,
   (CCA),
   Peshawar, Pakistan;

7. Iñgo, Mr. Guhr,
(UNICEF),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

8. Nancy, Ms. Hatch Dupree,
(ACBAR/ARIC),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

9. Omary, Ms. Freshta,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

10. Persson, Mr. Jorgen,
(Radda Barnen),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

11. Rafi, Mr. Habibullah,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

B: List of Children Participants

1. Amozgar, Ms. Zahra,
(Bibi Somaia High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

2. Azadah, Ms.,
(Oxford Public School),
Peshawar, Pakistan

3. Hafizi, Ms. Hadia,
(Bibi Somaia High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

4. Haseeb, Mr.,
(Mahmood Hotaki School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

5. Langari, Mr. S. Khalid,
(Salman-i-Farsi School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

6. Majboor, Ms. Maryam
(Bibi Hajar High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

7. Naser, Ms. Assia,
(Oxford Public School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

8. Naser, Ms. Hajira,
(Oxford Public School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

9. Neelofar, Ms.,
(Bibi Somaia High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

10. Omid, Mr.,
(Challenger English Language Center),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

11. Rafi, Ms. Khatera,
(Bibi Somaia High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

12. Sadat, Ms. Arizo,
(Bibi Somaia High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

13. Sadat, Ms. Zohal,
(Bibi Somaia High School),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

C: List of Participants

1. Abid, Mr. Muti ullah,
   (Daily Wahdat),
   Peshawar, Pakistan;

2. Akhtar, Mr. Prof. Shamim,
   (Afghanistan Committee, AI),
   Karachi, Pakistan;

3. Alif Khan, Mr.,
   (Save the Children)
   Haripur, Pakistan;

4. Allahdad, Mr.,
   (Nangarhar University),
   Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

5. Amina, Ms.,
   (UNICEF),
   Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

6. Aqila, Ms.,
(AWDP),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

7. Azami, Ms. Hafiza,
(UNICEF),
Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan;

8. Baburi, Mr. M. Zahir
(WUFA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

9. Baluch, Mr. Dr. Sher A.,
(RADA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

10. Baluch, Ms. Belqis,
(ROAOW),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

11. Barakatullah, Mr.,
(Nangarhar University),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

12. Barekzai, Mr. Mohd. Bashir,
(RADA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

13. Barra, Mian Abdul Majid,
(NOVIB),
Islamabad, Pakistan;

14. Bazgar, Mr. Dr. Mohd Farid,
(ORA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

15. Daudzai, Mr. Umer,
(UNDP),
Islamabad, Pakistan;

16. Ehsas, Mr. Babrak,
(RFF),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

17. Ekanayake, Mr.,
(UNESCO),
Islamabad, Pakistan;

18. Farzana, Ms.,
(BBC/AED),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

19. Fawzia, Ms.,
(AWC),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

20. Hairan, Mr. Yosuf,
(Radio Afghanistan),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

21. Hajera, Ms.,
(AWDP),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

22. Hassanyar, Mr. Prof. S. Amirshah,
(Kabul University),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

23. Hatif, Mr. Naseer,
(Lodhi High School),
Islamabad, Pakistan;

24. Hoquqmal, Ms. Mahbuba,
(Kabul University),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

25. Ibrahim, Mr.,
(CCA),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

26. Kargar, Mr. M. Akbar,
(BBC/AED),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

27. Kazemi, Mr. S. Sadeq,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

28. Khadija, Ms.,
(Save the Children-USA),
Haripur, Pakistan;

29. Laila, Ms.,
(SC),
Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan;

30. Lailuma, Ms. Dr.,
(AWC),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

31. Lalee, Mr. Dr. Abdul Ali,
(HOCA),
Germany;

32. Majboor, Ms. Trina,
(CCA),
Peshawar;

13:30 - 14:00 Presentation
Title: Survival - Dr. Ali Lalee, Director, HOCA (Health Organization for Central Afghanistan) and Farid Bazgar.
14:00 - 16:00 Group work
16:00 - 17:00 Plenary

DAY II - 18 NOVEMBER:

Morning Session

09:00 - 09:30 Presentation
Title: Development - Mr. Safa, Dean Faculty of Humanities, Balkh University
09:30 - 11:30 Working groups
11:30 - 12:30 Plenary
12:30 - 13:30 Lunch and Prayer

Afternoon Session

13:30 - 14:00 Presentation
Title: Protection, Ms. Mahboba Huquqmal, Dean Faculty of Law, Kabul University
14:00 - 16:00 Working groups
16:00 - 16:30 Plenary

DAY III - 19 NOVEMBER

Morning Session

09:00 - 09:30 Presentation
Title: Participation, Mr. Hashemi, Protect the Afghan Children organization.
09:30 - 11:30 Working group
11:30 - 12:30 Lunch and prayer

33. Maroof, Mr. Asif,
(BBC),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

34. Mirza, Mr. Dr.,
(ISRA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

35. Mirzada, Ms. Shahla,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

36. Moquim, Mr. Eng. Zia ul Haq,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

37. Mubalegh, Mr. Eng. Ziauddin,
(CCA/HTTC),
Wardak, Afghanistan;

38. Nagina, Ms.,
(UNICEF),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

39. Naheel, Mr. Musa,
(UNICEF),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

40. Najiba, Ms.,
(SC),
Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan;

41. Naser, Mr. Jamil,
(CCA),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

42. Naser, Mr. S. Amin,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

43. Naser, Mr. Zaheer,
(CCA),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

44. Nasruddin, Mr. Dr. S,
(Ministry of Education),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

45. Naveed, Mr. S. Zaher,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

46. Okelo, Mr. Francis,
(UNSMA),
Islamabad, Pakistan;

47. Omidwar, Ms. Rahima,
(ex-UNICEF),
Helmand, Afghanistan;

48. Palwasha, Ms.,
(UNICEF),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

49. Partowina, Ms.,
(AWRC),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

50. Qasim, Mr.,
(Mohammadia High School),
Wardak, Afghanistan;

51. Qudsia, Ms.,
(UNICEF),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

52. Rasekh, Mr. Abdul Samad,
(Pamir Daily),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

53. Roghani, Mr. Sadaqat Shah,
(RBTU-Radda Barnen),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

54. Safi, Dr. Mukamil,
(NDUDU),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

55. Safi, Ms. Rahima,
(AWC),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

56. Wafa, Mr. M. Dawood,
(CCA),
Jalalabad, Afghanistan;

57. Woroor, Mr. Dr. Gul Jan,
Peshawar, Pakistan

58. Yazdan Parast, Ms. Qadria Ibrahimi,
(AWHA),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

59. Yousuf, Mr. Eng.,
(Aschiana),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

A group representative explains the findings of her group.

Representatives of children group reporting to the plenary meeting.

Raporteurs report the results of their discussions.

A view of the seminar and the exhibition showing children participation in the seminar.

A scene of plenary meeting during the seminar.

Mr. Sadeq Kazemi, Assistant Director of CCA and Dr. Farid Bazgar presenting their papers.



A working group exchanging their views



Another working group.

Mr. Nassim Jawad, NOVIB, Development Consultant delivers his statement.

Professor Shamim Akhtar, Representative of Amnesty International reads out AI message

Mr. Jan Scalton, Education Program Officer of UNICEF, giving inaugural speech at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Jorgen Persson, Representative of Radda Barnen, addressing as keynote speaker.

60. Zaki, Mr. Faraidoon,
(Save the Children - USA),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

61. Zamani, Mr. Dr. A. S.,
(AMA),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

62. Zarlasht, Ms.,
(Save the Children-USA),
Kabul, Afghanistan;

63. Zeerak, Mr. M. E,
(GRSP),
Peshawar, Pakistan;

64. Zhwak, Mr. M. Saeed,
(Save the Children-USA),
Quetta, Pakistan;

65. Zuhair, Mr. S.,
(CCA),
Peshawar, Pakistan.

Mr. Sarwar Hosaini, CCA Director, addressing the audience at the opening ceremony of the Seminar.

Mr. Francis Okelo, Deputy Head of the UNSMA, officially opens the seminar.

Two children reciting poems at the closing ceremony.

A view of painting exhibition organized parallel to the seminar by CCA.

Annex II

Acronyms:

1.	**ACBAR/ARIC** Information	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief / ACBAR Resource Center
2.	**AI**	Amnesty International
3.	**AMA**	Afghan Medical Aid
4.	**ARI**	Acute Respiratory Infections
5.	**AWC**	Afghan Women Community
6.	**AWDP**	Afghan Women Development Program
7.	**AWHA**	Afghan Women High Association
8.	**AWRC**	Afghan Women Resource Center
9.	**BBC**	British Broadcasting Committee
10.	**BBC/AED**	British Broadcasting Committee / Afghan Education Drama
11.	**CCA**	Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan
12.	**CCA/HTTC**	Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan / Hazarajat Technical Training Centre
13.	**CIS**	Commonwealth Independent States
14.	**CRC**	Convention on the Rights of the Child
15.	**GRSP**	Ghanzni Rural Support Program
16.	**HOCA**	Health Organization for Central Afghansitan
17.	**ICM**	International Council Meeting (AI)
18.	**IEC**	International Executive Committee (AI)
19.	**ISRA**	Islamic relief Agency
20.	**NGO**	Non Governmental Organization
21.	**NOVIB**	Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation
22.	**OIC**	Organization of Islamic Conference
23.	**ORAI**	Orphans Refugees and Aid International
24.	**RADA**	Rehabilitation Agency for Development of Afghanistan
25.	**RBTU**	Radda Barnen Training Unit
26.	**RFF**	Radio France International
27.	**ROAOW**	Relief Organization for Afghan Orphans and Women
28.	**SC**	Save the Children
29.	**SC-UK**	Save the Children - United Kingdom
30.	**SC-USA**	Save the Children - United States of America
31.	**TVs**	Televisions
32.	**UN**	United Nations
33.	**UNDCP**	United Nations Drug Control Program
34.	**UNDP**	United Nations Development Program
35.	**UNESCO**	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
36.	**UNICEF**	United Nations Children's Fund
37.	**UNOCHA**	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan
38.	**UNSMA**	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
39.	**USA**	United State of America
40.	**VOA**	Voice of America
41.	**VOG**	Voice of Germany
42.	**WUFA**	Writers Union of Free Afghanistan

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Mazar-e-Sharif,
Balkh, Afghanistan

Afternoon Session

13:30 - 14:30	Open Forum
14:30 - 15:00	Presentation of seminar recommendations to the UN
15:00 - 15:30	Closing Address, Mr. Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, Coordinator UNOCHA.
15:30 - 16:00	Distribution of prizes to the winners of the writing & painting contest.
16:00	End Seminar

WORKING GROUPS:

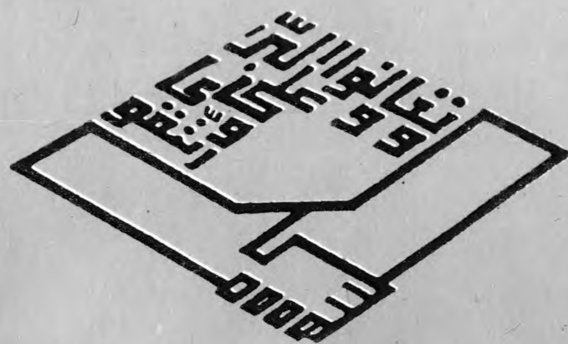
Key questions (draft):

1. What is the situation of Afghan children in relation to the (survival, development, protection, participation) rights as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (identify key issues);
2. What strategies are needed to promote the (survival, development, protection, participation) rights of Afghan children, so as to improve their status (develop action plan).

Seminar Recommendations:

Recommendations will relate to the third seminar objective:
"to put children's rights higher on the agenda of UN agencies and national and international NGOs working for Afghanistan".

Part I
Messages



Report of the Seminar on the Rights of the Child in Afghanistan

17-19 November, 1996 - Peshawar, Pakistan

Report
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Rights of the Child in Afghanistan

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgment



ike the previous three CCA's seminar, the fourth CCA's seminar with the theme of the Rights of the Child in Afghanistan was a great success. The seminar owes its success to many organizations and individuals. CCA is grateful to all of them. Particularly I would like to thank the following:

- *NOVIB for its financial support to the seminar which made the seminar possible.*
- *Participants of the seminar for their constructive comments and suggestions.*
- *Members of the organizing committee for assisting CCA in the planning and organization of this seminar. The Planning Committee was made up of these individuals: Ms. Angela Kearney, (SC-UK); Ms. Afifa Azim, (RBTU/Radda Barnen); Eng. Abdul Ahad Aziz, (SC-USA); Ms. Karlsson Bente, (Radda Barnen); Ms. Ellen van Kalmthout, (UNICEF); Mr. S. Sarwar Hosaini, (CCA); Mr. Ingo Guhr, (UNICEF); Ms. Nancy Hatch Dupree, (ACBAR/ARIC); Ms. Freshta Omary, (CCA); Mr. Jorgen Persson, (Radda Barnen); Mr. Habibullah Rafi, (CCA).*
- *Mr. Jorgen Persson and his colleagues at Radda Barnen for holding a prepatory training workshop for the facilitators of the seminar.*
- *Ms. Ellen van Kalmthout (UNICEF) for providing the facilitators with some necessary information materials about children and for her contribution to the planning of the seminar.*
- *Ms Nancy Hatch Dupree for encouraging us all the time and for her useful comments.*
- *Ms. Angela Kearney (SC-UK) for providing none NGO members of participants with a sum as per diem.*

And last but not least I would like to thank CCA staff for making all the arrangements, translation of documents and preparing the reports of the seminar in Dari, Pashto, and English.

➢ Sarwar Hosaini, Director